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THE COLLEGE OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

I. HISTORY

On the third of February, 1894, Professor J. Laurence Laughlin presented to the Senate of the University of Chicago a plan for a School of Commerce and Industry. The plan was the culmination of two years of thought and was a comprehensive scheme which would have added \$38,500 to the annual budget of the University of those days. On motion of Professor Albion W. Small the general principle was approved and the Senate recommended that the field be occupied as soon as possible. This action was the first recorded step toward the formation of the present College of Commerce and Administration.

Apparently the Senate discovered that recommending an annual expenditure of \$38,500 was one thing and securing the money to expend was another. The records of the Senate for the next two years show a very great willingness to proceed and a progressive moderation in the suggestions for financial outlay until on March 14, 1896, it was voted that \$5,800 was the minimum necessary to start the work. Meanwhile it had been agreed to establish a separate and distinct college; this projected college had twice had its name changed; and quite detailed consideration had been given to the curriculum.

The net result of this agitation and voting was merely to secure a grouping of existing courses within the existing organization of the

University. The annual register for 1898-99 lists as the colleges of the University "the College of Arts, Literature, and Science, Commerce and Politics, and the College for Teachers," but there was listed no separate dean of the College of Commerce and Politics, nor was there a separate faculty. Save for a change of name to "College of Commerce and Administration," this situation continued to 1902.

On March 15, 1902, the committee of the Senate on the organization of the College of Commerce and Administration submitted a report which was adopted. Under the terms of this report a separate technical school was again provided for. It was to have its own faculty and its own administrative officers; it was to make its own regulations concerning its work, subject only to the approval of the Senate and the Council. The Board of Trustees approved, and on April 26, 1902, the faculty of the College of Commerce and Administration held its first meeting. The minutes of the meetings of this faculty continue until May 22, 1905, since which date few if any meetings have been held. The college was active in making recommendations but limitation of funds prevented development. Then too, since it was primarily a college designed to train for business service alone, its restricted field secured the intellectual support of but one section of the University. There was considerable discussion concerning the wisdom of widening the scope of the college, but groupings of courses in preparation for journalism, for legal work, and (later) for the consular service were the only tangible results. All this is equivalent to saying that after all this college succeeded in little more than making provision for the grouping of existing courses in economics and closely related subjects; and while its registrations rose to 261 in the academic year 1910-11, the vitality of the college was low.

Evidence is not lacking that this state of affairs was unsatisfactory to those interested in the project. A mere grouping of courses with feeble additions of professional work was so little in accord with the comprehensive plan of 1894 that some of its warmest advocates urged its abandonment unless it could be carried out on a scale commensurate with its importance. What actually happened was that the administrative forms were retained,

and the college was not abolished, but its activities were reduced to a minimum until such time as the University might feel justified in proceeding.

Meanwhile there was much investigating and collaborating in the making of plans. In 1910 Mr. Rockefeller made the University his final gift of ten millions of dollars. The University Senate at once formed a committee to consider ways in which this gift could be used to the best advantage in strengthening the existing divisions of the University, the express stipulation of the donor being that the funds were to be thus appropriated. The Dean of the Faculties entered upon a painstaking study of (*a*) the present equipment and efficiency of the University and (*b*) the possible avenues of service to the community. As one phase of this investigation the present Dean of the College of Commerce and Administration was sent to study American schools of commerce, schools of civics, bureaus of municipal research, and similar agencies. After this study had been made, several meetings of the members of the social science departments were held and a plan of action was drawn up which met the approval of the administration.

II. PURPOSES

The College of Commerce and Administration which has come through this history now faces the future with a perfectly clear conception of its purposes, with some little appreciation of the first steps necessary in order to accomplish those purposes, with an open and inquiring spirit concerning the methods to be used in the more distant future, and with an elastic scheme of organization which will make possible the adjustment of means to ends.

1. In its relation to the community this college conceives that very considerable existing stores of scientific information in the field of the social sciences should be made more accessible for the furthering of the progress of society. The college will assume some responsibility for this task. In rendering this service the college has a duty to more than one section of the community. It hopes to serve by aiding commercial and industrial development; it hopes equally to serve by assisting in the solution of our pressing political and social problems. It believes that there is sufficient

unity and coherence in the social sciences to justify an attempt to advance all along the line; and it has accordingly placed under one organization the functions which in some institutions are performed by schools or colleges of commerce, the functions which in other institutions are performed by schools for social workers, and the functions which in still other institutions are given over to bureaus of municipal research. The motives actuating this tripartite alliance are more than motives concerned with economy of effort. The main motive is the belief that a conscious, cordial co-operation of all the social sciences in a sort of "social science institute" has within it greater possibilities of service for our community than can be secured by sorties, however strong, of single interests.

The college has accordingly been organized upon that basis. A survey of the main features of its curriculum will serve to illustrate the point. The diagram (see p. 102) shows that the first aim is to secure for the student a broad cultural foundation in the main divisions of human knowledge. Above this foundation is placed a broad survey of the social sciences. In these social science survey courses the future business man, the future social worker, the future civil servant, and the future teacher and investigator in the various social science departments will sit side by side. In the mutual give-and-take of discussions over broad social questions these developing minds should learn mutually to understand and to respect one another's motives, difficulties, and opportunities. They should be led to appreciate the relationships of their future specialized tasks to the operations of the rest of organized society. Even after the social science survey has been completed, narrow specialization may not occur. The students pass into three groups: the business group, the civic group, and the charitable and philanthropic service group. In each of these groups certain basic semi-cultural, semi-professional courses are required of all. In this work, the academic spirit (using this expression in the objectionable sense) is guarded against by introducing a considerable amount of contact with actual conditions,¹ and at least one vacation period

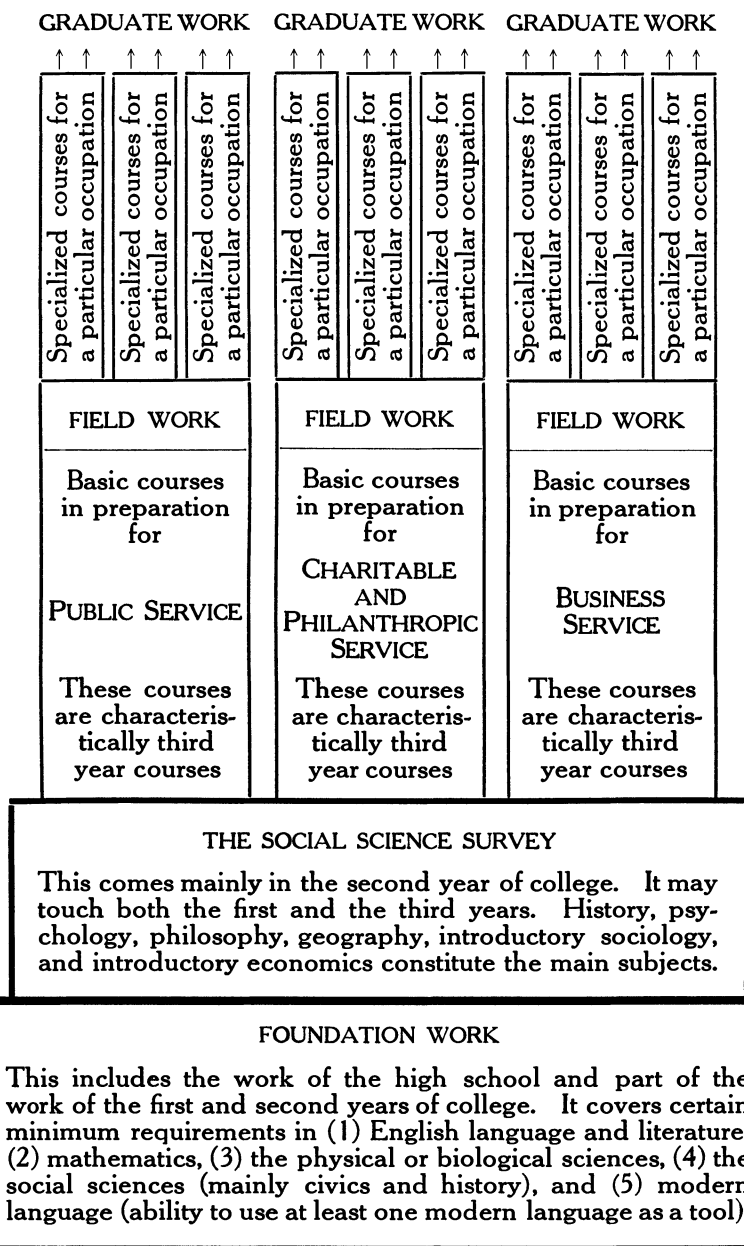
¹ The courses themselves will be run on the problem basis, as far as possible, and plans are under way for securing "case" material. In addition, the students will be taken on "field trips" and lecturers will be brought in from outside. It is recognized

is to be spent in actual service. The final stage is the distinctly professional work, partly of undergraduate, partly of graduate grade, in which the student cultivates intensively his own special field. The student who has traversed these stages should go out with some idea of social needs, with some zeal for serving those needs, with some appreciation of the rights, the privileges, and the obligations of the other members of society, and with some training to enable him to be of real usefulness. In brief, the college assumes that, at the last analysis, its justification must be a social justification; that, however important it may be to turn out business men who can make money, social workers who can command good salaries, civic workers who can rise to positions of influence and affluence, the most important task of all is to aid in promoting the progress and welfare of society. Our medical schools are demanded not primarily that physicians may command good fees but that society may be served. Our law schools may aid in making lawyers who will be wealthy, but the mere fact that we impose a bar examination shows that the interest of society, not that of the individual, is dominant. So our schools of commerce, of civics, of philanthropy will miss their purpose if, either by intention or through neglect, the individual, money-making side is permitted to have the ruling hand.¹

2. In its relation to the development of the social sciences the purpose of this college is equally clear. Its undergraduate work is a training school. Its graduate work will be partly a training school, partly an opportunity to extend the bounds of present knowledge. Research activities of the students will have some

that these field trips must be so conducted as to make them real studies and not pleasure jaunts. It is also recognized that the outside lecturer is a real problem. However, neither field trips nor outside lectures present insuperable difficulties. Properly managed, they can be made to constitute two of our best pedagogical devices.

¹ The danger of the development of an anti-social, or at best a non-social attitude is particularly great in a college of commerce. Its professional attitude is constantly in the way of temptation of becoming merely a money-making attitude. The "mere grind of the machinery" will tend to bring about such a result. This tendency can be offset in part by eternal vigilance upon the part of the administration but it should aid greatly to have the work in commerce closely bound up, in at least its earlier stages, with work in preparation for social and political service. The "grind of the machinery" in these latter fields will be distinctly pro-social.



importance. Far more important will be the investigations by the instructors in the specialized or professional courses. In this formative period of such education, *it is clear that the college must expect to carry, as one of its most important functions, its research divisions.* Grant that this be done. It may be poor prophecy; nevertheless it is prophesied that this research activity, guided by what will become practically a co-operative social science institute, will not merely add to the bounds of existing scientific knowledge; it will also cause a considerable reorganization of the present social sciences. If the whole truth were to be told it would probably appear that the future social sciences have more to gain from such a college than the college has to gain from the present social sciences. Concerning this, judgments will vary. It is hard to believe, however, that there can be any considerable difference of opinion concerning the statement that we of the social sciences have, in the past, attempted to advance through intermittent individual forays rather than through concerted action. Even in these forays we have been handicapped by a lack of ammunition. This college purposes to furnish the laboratories and workshops in which ammunition may be prepared and it purposes to attempt a general advance.

3. A college must have some relation to the educational situation in which it finds itself. In our own case this involves (a) relationship to the established policy of the University of Chicago in respect to what are called combined courses;¹ (b) relationship to the work already organized in closely related fields; and (c) relationship to the general educational situation in the community.

The relationship to the "combined course" plan current at the University of Chicago commits this college to a form of undergraduate-graduate organization concerning the wisdom of which persons will differ. Concerning the intent of the organization there can be no doubt. The purpose to develop the professional courses as work of a graduate type is quite clear. The purpose is equally clear to use, *for such students as are properly prepared, a*

¹ The plan of the combined course is well illustrated by the law work of the University of Chicago. Students are permitted to count the first year of work in the law as the fourth year of the undergraduate course. They thus complete the "combined course" of A.B. and J.D. in six years.

part or all of the Senior year¹ for professional work. The wisdom or lack of wisdom of the combined course is not here under discussion and accordingly this aspect of the matter will be dismissed with three statements. The first of these statements is that graduation at the end of 36 majors (the graduation requirement at the University of Chicago) is *possible only for such students as are properly prepared*. Those who spend the entire four years in this college must have their courses carefully supervised from the start. The entire 36 majors are at the disposal of the dean. Those who enter the college with advanced standing from some other institution or who transfer late in their course from some other division of the University must expect to take more than a total of 36 majors unless they have chosen wisely in their earlier work. The second remark to be made is that in some institutions where the combined course is not permitted, students of even ordinary capacity are allowed to carry extra work and complete the four years of undergraduate work in three years, a permission granted at the University of Chicago only to students of B grade or better. There are two sides to the question whether a condensed course is better than a combined course. The third remark is that the work of the College of Commerce and Administration is as yet in an experimental stage. This being true, one cannot in reason ask the University to set aside an established policy in order to secure hypothetical advantages in this experimental part of the institution. Particularly would such a request be unwise if the College of Commerce were given an organization sufficiently elastic to enable it later to make such changes as experience may justify. It will be found that this elastic organization has been provided.

The relationship of this college to work already organized in the University is one that grows out of the historical situation. The present resources of the University directly in, and closely related to, the field of this college are not beggarly. *Provided a proper*

¹ It is expected that for several years to come the great majority of the students will discontinue at the end of the four-year course. This statement will probably be more applicable to training for business than to training for civic, or charitable and philanthropic service. These latter callings are, for the present, more likely to tempt the students to graduate work. As for the business courses, little doubt is entertained that as good food is prepared the students will remain longer at the feast.

adjustment and reorganization of these existing resources can be made, and again providing that an organization sufficiently elastic to enable experimentation and development can be secured, it would seem to be poor economy to duplicate work already existing. Let us take some one subject as an illustration. It is of course obvious that the typical undergraduate course, or courses, in railroads will not serve for professional needs. It does not follow that the *only* remedy is to insert another—professional—course, or courses, on railroads. It may be that there is a crying need of reorganization of the work in economics and that after this reorganization has been made there will be much less talk concerning the difference between economics courses and business courses. The same remark applies, making proper allowance for varying conditions, to courses in other divisions of the social sciences. This is plainly no place to enter upon this particular controversy. Without discussion, it is submitted that the plan outlined in the January number of this journal indicates that it is possible to reorganize the courses in economics so as properly to care for both undergraduate needs and professional needs without undue duplication of effort. The railroad case is a case in point. The undergraduate should have an opportunity to secure a general survey of the material common to the usual courses in railroads, corporation finance, combinations, and industrial development. But he should have this *as* a survey in which he may get the general bearings. He should not have it as an intensive specialized study. The general survey can be given as a course on economic organization. The courses in railroads, corporation finance, and combinations can then be lifted to the graduate, professional level. This illustration is but one of many. It is by no means peculiar to courses in Economics. Returning now to the relationship of the College of Commerce and Administration to the existing resources of the University, these resources both within, and adjacent to, the field of this college are being reorganized upon a basis of co-operation rather than of duplication. It is believed that the final outcome will be a considerable increase in efficiency per unit of outlay.

The relationship of this college to the general educational situation in the community is of course a many-sided complex. In

part it is a matter of co-operation with secondary schools both in formal entrance requirements and in adjustment of curricula. In part, it is a matter of co-operation with other colleges and universities. In large part it is a matter of the service we can render by aiding in the solution of the general problems of collegiate education. It is the last phase which is reserved for comment. In these days no very great amount of originality is required to draw up a criticism of collegiate education. He who runs may read. There is, however, one aspect of that criticism which is quite significant for our purposes. The business men who today are hostile or at best lukewarm toward any kind of collegiate training and particularly toward collegiate training for business have some considerable truth in their position. One need not be greatly concerned over their statement that business cannot be "taught." Neither can law or medicine in the sense in which these critics think of teaching. Their statements that we do not yet know the laws of business or that such laws do not exist are not alarming. Similar statements have been made of other new ventures. When, however, these critics point out that administration of colleges is such as not necessarily to turn out efficient "broad men sharpened to the point" even when the raw material was good, they say things we all know to be true and we know that here is the real problem of all kinds of collegiate education.

In this field the College of Commerce and Administration of the University of Chicago takes a definite, unequivocal stand. College discipline and not a college degree; efficient application to a conscious purpose and not four years of gentlemanly existence; breadth of training and not "36 majors"; a coherent educational program varying with individual needs and not a hit-or-miss elective system, are to be the goals. The bearing of this on the problems of collegiate education is patent. As far as the students in this particular college are concerned it means that they must break away from the traditional undergraduate attitude toward their work.¹ For these students, the four years of college cannot

¹ This does *not* mean that there is to be any sacrifice of the cultural element. If the record sheets and the registration cards of the students in the College of Commerce and Administration are compared with like data for students in the regular under-

be regarded as a thing apart from life. Under such circumstances an *esprit de corps* and a real interest in the work will automatically develop¹ and we shall secure something of the earnest spirit found in our law and medical schools. If this can be done, the conventional "collegiate problems" for this group of students should largely disappear. Moreover, such an outcome will aid in clarifying the issue in the other divisions of undergraduate instruction. If, as seems probable, this college can draw to it the earnest students who are preparing for business service, public service, charitable and philanthropic service; if, as seems probable, the science work (for example, in its training for medical work) can draw to it the earnest students who have that bent; and if courses arranged for other purposes can attract to them their earnest contingent we shall at least have developed some standards by which to measure the remnant. Once the issue has been clearly presented the solution will be forthcoming.

One must not make the mistake of supposing that all the problems of collegiate education arise from the student side. Probably considerably less than half arise from this source. Administration and instruction have not a few sins for which to answer. It is submitted, without argument, that a college of commerce and administration, organized with a definite purpose to serve the whole community as far as its powers permit, must be particularly careful to secure instruction of an efficient, sympathetic type. It

graduate colleges, it will be hard to establish that the individualized commerce and administration curricula contain a smaller proportion of real cultural discipline. Rather the reverse will be found to be true. Again this does not mean the abolition of *wholesome* student activities. For some students it will mean curtailment of student activities, for others it will mean participation in them. The whole spirit of the college is that of adaptation of activities to needs.

¹ The change indicated cannot come about by magic. Care must be taken to insure (a) efficient, enthusiastic instruction and (b) a student constituency which actually wishes this kind of training. One thing may be mentioned as having a bearing on this latter point. At the opening of the reorganized College of Commerce and Administration, October 1, 1912, there were 140 students registered in the college. Within a week this number was cut to 73. The other 67 were not permitted to remain in this group; some because their cases could be more wisely administered elsewhere, others because they were not sufficiently in earnest to undertake the discipline of an individualized curriculum. The 73 who were permitted to remain in the college at least understand the nature of the contract they have undertaken.

is further submitted that such a college has exceptional opportunities to develop such instruction. The field is new. The contact between administration, instructor, and student will be constant and real—and is apt, as things are going today, to be quite as beneficial to instructor as to student.

III. ORGANIZATION

A statement of purpose will not suffice. The real test comes with the question whether the organization is of such a character as will make it probable that good intentions can be realized. The final answer to such a question will have to be deferred a quarter of a century. Thus far the actual administration has been concerned mainly with (*a*) making certain that the constituency of the college is a sound one, (*b*) making provision for giving this constituency the very best training the present resources permit, (*c*) surveying those present resources in order to determine at what points they are sufficient in their present form, at which points they will be sufficient when reorganized, and at what points they must be supplemented, and (*d*) determining the order of development. Actual experience being thus limited, there remains an enumeration of the factors which seem to indicate that the organization will prove effective.

The fortunate situation of the college with reference to its curriculum and the control of its students is a source of strength. As has been indicated, the course has been regarded as professional in character and the entire 36 majors are at the disposal of the dean. In actual practice this means that *each student's curriculum is an individual matter*, the first two or more years being devoted to laying broad foundations and to strengthening any weak points in previous training, and the last two or more years being turned gradually into professional work. Such a procedure accomplishes several things. For one thing it effectually disposes of the objection from either student or instructor that such a course is lacking in cultural elements. The truth of the matter is that such individual attention is more likely to secure broad culture than is probable under the usual college curriculum. Neither can the objection be urged that placing control of the 36 majors in the hands of the dean too

greatly circumscribes the individuality of the student. Three things prevent such an outcome. To begin with, no one is admitted to the college until after a long interview of the "vocational guidance" type has established beyond all question that this student has a well-reasoned purpose founded on a consideration of all the facts at issue. Such a student's individuality is not likely to be hampered by providing for his needs. Furthermore, even after he has been admitted he will be permitted—and urged—to "browse" outside the preserves of the dean. If his abilities and the schedule permit, he may take "honor" courses as "extras" without payment of fee—and without credit. Finally, the courses prescribed by the dean will not be chosen on any basis other than that of serving, *in the very broadest sense*, the needs of the student.

The college is also fortunate in the hearty co-operation it receives from the departments within the social science group proper, which are directly concerned with the scheme. There is a very definite feeling that this is the next step in advance; that the advance means better undergraduate work, better graduate work, better organization of courses in each department, better co-operation between departments, and better opportunities of service in the community.

Speaking generally, the same spirit has manifested itself among departments not so closely interested. Individual instructors have come into the office with promises of support and offers of any service desired. It would be possible even to secure for Commerce and Administration students separate sections of certain foundation courses if such action would seem to be wise. No doubt the nature of the curriculum has aided in winning the support of the faculty. The individual guidance of the student has appealed to the instructors as has the unmistakable purpose of securing real discipline and training.

Finally the College of Commerce and Administration has an organization sufficiently elastic to meet the needs of growth and sufficiently autonomous to provide the experimentation and investigation such a venture requires. In the organization of the University the work is regarded as professional or technical training and as a consequence it is classed in the same group with the

College of Education, the Law School, or the Divinity School. It has its separate budget, separate faculty, and its own administrative officers. Its curriculum is no mere paper scheme, no mere collection of existing courses. Some existing courses will be retained; some will be retained in name but reorganized in content; some will disappear entirely, and new ones of a technical nature will be added as rapidly as need demands, experience justifies, and funds permit. New instructors, when added by the College of Commerce and Administration, will, for the present, be added to existing departments, but recommendations for appointment or promotion of such instructors will come from the college and not from the department, thus securing proper control of the professional courses.

Very likely some workers in business education will feel that more rapid progress might be made with an organization designed for business education alone and comparatively unrelated to existing University policies. Some workers in the civic and philanthropic fields may have a like feeling concerning the part of the college interested in their work. There is much truth in the contention. The entries are not all on the debit side, however. This is work in the social sciences and these sciences are new. It is *experimental* work in these new sciences. Under such conditions there will be large gains in being closely related to the rest of the group that we may all move together. We shall move more slowly, but possibly with less waste, with more prevision, with more protection against narrow specialization and unworthy ideals, and certainly with more final effect upon the community in general and the educational group in particular.

LEON C. MARSHALL

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO